"GT" 7/26/11

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sharon Gerbracht, left, and Nancy Gerbracht pose for a photo Monday before being married in a group same-sex marriage in Niagara Falls, N.Y. On Sunday, New York became the sixth and largest state to recognize same-sex marriage.

GAY WEDDINGS CONTINUE AS OPPONENTS SUE IN N.Y.

The Associated Press

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. • Opponents of New York's gay marriage law filed the first lawsuit challenging the measure, an anticipated salvo that came Monday as dozens of same-sex couples exchanged vows in a group ceremony overlooking Niagara Falls a day after the first gay weddings.

A representative of New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms and a rabbi said in a lawsuit filed in state court that New York's Senate violated its procedures and the state's open meetings law when it approved the bill last month.

The lawsuit claims that the Senate prevented lawmakers who opposed the bill from speaking and that the Senate didn't follow procedures that require a bill to go through appropriate committees before a full Senate vote.

Opponents of the gay marriage law had promised lawsuits.

"We should have an open and deliberative process," said the Rev. Jason McGuire, executive director of New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms. "If truly the legislation can stand on its own merits, then it should be able to withstand being deliberated publicly."

Spokesmen for Senate Republicans and the state's attorney general declined to comment.

Monday, a mass wedding in Niagara Falls saw 46 same-sex couples exchange vows, and 100 more couples were expected to marry en masse at Bethpage State Park on Long Island today.

ANATOMY OF A LAWSUIT

The New York bill was adopted the night of June 24, the last day of the legislative session after days of closed-door negotiations involving Gov. Andrew Cuomo and key lawmakers.

The lawsuit claims that Cuomo improperly waived the three-day waiting period between a bill's introduction and a vote. Such waivers are common in Albany for negotiated bills.

Between the Lines

By Ralph Routon

Acceptance lives at PrideFest

Sometime between the fancy old convertibles and the authentic gorilla suits on the Tony's Downtown Bar truck, a well-dressed woman walked up to me Sunday at the annual PrideFest parade in downtown Colorado Springs.

She had been marching in the sun-baked procession down Tejon Street that included more than 70 groups and floats, but now she wanted to meet someone from the *Independent*.

"Are you **Ralph Routon**?" she asked, almost pronouncing it right, before saying she enjoyed our paper each week. We talked briefly, and then I asked her name.

"**Mike**," she said. "Well, actually, **Adrienne**. It's really been nice to meet you."

She turned her attention back to applauding others in the parade. And at that moment, I realized that PrideFest has matured into adulthood.

Don't miss the key word in that sentence. Matured. It's been happening steadily in recent years, but last weekend it was unmistakable.

This was the 21st year for PrideFest in the Springs, and to honor the occasion, organizers came up with the perfect theme: "Coming of Age," complete with 1950s-style trappings. Admirably, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender attendees just wanted to share their ... pride. From this view, not as many folks seemed intent on being as outrageous as possible, and there were clearly more families with kids than in the past.

'I'll walk in the parade myself next year.'

Sure, people partied for two days, some harder than others. And certainly, many still were stinging from the lack of a hoped-for proclamation from new Mayor **Steve Bach** or from City Council as a group. They settled for a letter of support from Council President **Scott Hente** and President Pro-Tem **Jan Martin**, which still succeeded in providing a city-level stamp of legitimacy.

But there were no anti-establishment outbursts, no acts of opportunism, at PrideFest 21, as might have been the case in previous years. Nobody was interested in letting others' lack of understanding get in the way of their purpose. This crowd had a different outlook.

Many wore brightly colored T-shirts provided by the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado bearing the message "Born this way," obviously inspired by the Lady Gaga song ("No matter gay, straight or bi / Lesbian, transgendered life / I'm on the right track, baby / I was born to survive") but also by the hope that someday the world will have enough undeniable proof to accept "born this way" as genetic reality.

Here's another message that came through at PrideFest 21, though we will be a better city when it's true every weekend of the year: It's OK to be gay.

Certainly, that was the view of the many churches and businesses that manned their booths and tents. They weren't into making political statements. Just embracing tolerance and compassion.

Some of us might not have realized how noticeable it really was, except that a visitor came into the *Independent*'s tent Sunday afternoon. Not just any visitor, but another member of City Council whom nobody expected to see at this occasion.

Tim Leigh, three months into his first term as one of the city's elected leaders, had been checking out PrideFest for himself, and he had feelings to share.

"I just wanted you to know that conservatives do come to this event," Leigh said, in a boastful tone. He came to see what PrideFest was really like, instead of just listening to others' judgments. Clearly, he was surprised to discover that you probably could find far more exhibitionism and depravity on any beach, from Florida to California, than around this celebration.

"This is it?" Leigh asked, almost incredulously. "Heck, I'll walk in the parade myself next year."

He said that, and the reaction was immediate: "We're going to hold you to that, Tim."

"That's fine. I'll be here," Leigh said, and it was obvious he meant it.

Just one person. Perhaps not a total convert, but not an enemy, either. For those who care about the gay scene, it's more about acceptance than anything.

And perhaps next time, everyone on City Council, along with the mayor and even my new acquaintance Adrienne, can wear T-shirts emblazoned with a statement that would mean more than any proclamation:

Tolerance lives here.

— routon@csin

"GT" 7/24/11

NEW YORK

NOW THAT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS LEGAL, A BOOM IS EXPECTED

The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. • Elissa Kane and Lynne Lekakis wed in an emotional ceremony in 2004 with their 7-year-old daughter, Nora, spreading rose petals down the aisle, church members standing with them in support and Kane's father toasting the couple.

Although they were married by a Unitarian minister, they were denied a license by the city clerk.

It will be a different story for the Albany couple on Monday.

New York will usher in legal gay marriage today with an expected wedding boom as hundreds of people like Kane and Lekakis seize the moment. Couples planning to wed in the first week under the new law talked not only about blissful futures, but also about hard-fought victories, political statements and a sense that New York is catching up with what has been in their hearts for a long time.

"We've been marginalized by state law for so long and to finally be invited into the party makes me well up and makes me want to cry every time I think about it," said Mark Lynch, who will marry his partner of 29 years Monday in a group ceremony at Niagara Falls. "We're trying to make this a great celebration."

New York today becomes the sixth and largest state to sanction same-sex marriage. More than a half-dozen couples planned to exchange vows in the moments after midnight, and more than a thousand more could wed within several days. Clerks' offices in New York City and a dozen other cities will open today specifically to handle the rush.

WASHINGTON

"GT" 7/22/11

PANETTA WILL APPROVE END OF BAN ON GAYS SERVING IN THE MILITARY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON • Pentagon chief Leon Panetta has decided to end the ban on gays serving openly in the armed services and certify that repealing the 17-year-old prohibition will not hurt the military's ability to fight, officials said Thursday.

His decision, which was expected, comes two weeks after the chiefs of the military services told Panetta that ending the ban would not affect military readiness. Dismantling the ban fulfills a 2008 campaign promise by President Barack Obama, who helped usher the repeal through Congress and signed it into law late last December.

But the move also drew opposition from some in Congress and reluctance from military leaders, who worried that it could erode troop cohesion on the battlefield.

Defense officials said the announcement will be made this afternoon. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the decision had not been made public.

President Barack Obama is also expected to certify the change. Repeal of the ban would become effective 60 days after certification.

GT 7/7/11

MILITARY

COURT ORDERS U.S. TO END BAN ON GAYS NOW

BY LISA LEFF
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO • A federal appeals court ordered the U.S. government Wednesday to immediately cease enforcing the ban on openly gay members of the military.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said the "don't ask, don't tell" policy must be lifted now that the Obama administration has concluded it's unconstitutional to treat gay Americans differently under the law.

ONLINE > In depth
Family gets closure with ID of MIA remains. **gazette.com/military**

GAYS: Officials at Pentagon say they will follow order

FROM PAGE 1

The appeals court noted that Congress repealed the 17-year-old policy in December and that the Pentagon is preparing to certify that it is ready to welcome gays.

Pentagon officials said Wednesday that they will comply with the court order and are taking immediate steps to inform commanders in the field. Col. Dave Lapan, Pentagon spokesman, said the department is studying the ruling.

Advocates said without an appeal to the Supreme Court, which seems unlikely since the Pentagon is committed to repealing the rule, the government is barred from discharging gay service members anywhere in the world.

"The ruling ... removes all uncertainty — American service members are no longer under threat of discharge as the repeal implementation process goes forward," said R. Clarke Cooper, Log Cabin Republicans executive director.

The ruling came after a motion brought by Log Cabin Republicans, a group for gay GOP members, which last year persuaded a lower court to declare the ban unconstitutional.

After the government appealed U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips' decision, the 9th Circuit agreed to keep the policy in place until it could consider the matter. The appeals court reversed itself with Wednesday's order by lifting its hold on Phillips' decision.

"The circumstances and balance of hardships have changed, and (government) can no longer satisfy the de-

GT 7/18/11

GAY PRIDE

ACTIVE TROOPS MARCH IN PARADE

All branches of service represented in San Diego

BY JULIE WATSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO • About 200 active-duty troops and veterans wearing T-shirts advertising their branch of service marched Saturday in San Diego's gay pride parade with American flags and rainbow banners, marking what is believed to be the first time a military contingent has participated in such an event in the U.S.

Many of the active-duty troops said they were moved to come out because it is time to end the military's ban on openly gay troops.

The march comes a day after a federal appeals court reinstated "don't ask, don't tell" but with a caveat that prevents the government from investigating or penalizing anyone who is openly gay.

National Guard member Nichole Herrera, 31, said she didn't think twice about marching, even though the policy is back on the books. She said she was "choked up" several times as she walked down a main thoroughfare in San Diego, a major Navy port.

"This is one of the proudest days in my life. It's time for it (the policy) to be gone," Herrera said. "I'm a soldier no matter what, regardless of my sexual orientation."

The crowd roared as the group waving military flags and holding placards identifying their military branch walked past the thousands.

NATION

PRIDE: Still a risk for service members to be openly gay

FROM PAGE 1

including the Coast Guard. Marines and sailors ran out carrying their branch's flags over their heads. One Marine stopped to pose with two towering bikini-clad blondes in stiletto-heeled boots.

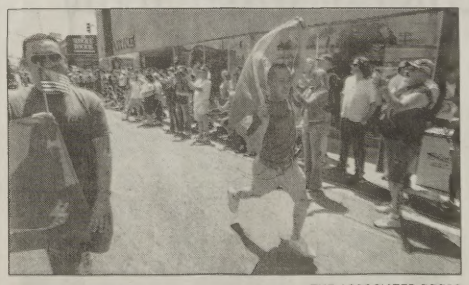
Onlookers stepped into the parade route to salute them. One man in a rainbow colored shirt waved his feather boa and yelled "Hooah!" the military battle cry.

The national Servicemembers Legal Defense Network — representing gay and lesbian active-duty military personnel — informed organizer Sean Sala that they are warning members that it is still a risk to come out as long as "don't ask, don't tell" is on the books.

Sala, a former Navy operations specialist, said it's time for the gay community to stop hiding in fear.

"This is not in any way a violation of military policy and it's time for the country to move on — plain and simple," he said.

Rolling slowly behind the 200 service members was a green half-ton military truck with the banner "Taking pride in our LGBT service men and women." Speakers on the truck blasted out "Taps" and military fight songs.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
Active-duty Marine Cpl. Jaime Rincon runs with the flag of the Marines in the Gay Pride Parade on Saturday in San Diego.

Miranda LeClair, 30, a former military police officer for the Navy, carried a sign that read: "Proudly served in silence for nine years." She attended with her girlfriend, also a former member of the military police.

"It's been a long time coming," said LeClair, who left the service in November. "This is really an emotional day for me."

LeClair said she was investigated under "don't ask, don't tell" in 2008 but her commanders decided not to pursue discharging her.

Marine Corps officials said service members who are not in uniform are within their rights to participate in a gay pride parade.

'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL'

LOS ANGELES • The military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy is back in place for now, with one caveat: the government is not allowed to investigate, penalize or discharge anyone who is openly gay.

A San Francisco federal appeals court ordered the military to temporarily continue the policy in an order late Friday, the court's response to a request from the Obama administration.

The order is the latest twist in the legal limbo gay service members have found themselves in as the policy is fought in the courts simultaneous to its slow dismantling by the federal government, which expects to do away with it by later this year.

In its three-page ruling, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the ruling was based on new information provided by the federal government, including a declaration from Major General Steven A. Hummer, who is leading the effort to repeal the policy.

The court of appeals had halted "don't ask, don't tell" July 6 but the Department of Justice filed an emergency motion Thursday saying ending the policy now would pre-empt the orderly process for rolling it back, per a law signed by President Barack Obama in December.

The ruling was supported by Servicemembers United, an organization of gay and lesbian troops and veterans, but the group's executive director Alexander Nicholson voiced frustration over the slow process of dismantling "don't ask, don't tell."

"The situation with finally ending this outdated and discriminatory federal policy has become absolutely ridiculous," said Nicholson. "It is simply not right to put the men and women of our armed forces through this circus any longer."

The Department of Justice said in a statement that senior military leaders are expected to make their decision on certifying repeal within the next few weeks. In the meantime, the Justice Department said "it remains the policy of the Department of Defense not to ask service members or applicants about their sexual orientation, to treat all members with dignity and respect, and to ensure maintenance of good order and discipline."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

16
Saturday

PRIDEFEST
Celebrate with the Pride Center at PrideFest. It's downtown in Acacia Park with all the fixings, like a parade, food, music, beer and games. The theme this year is "Springs Graffiti: An iconic revival of the fierce and fabulous '50s." 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, PrideFest Parade is noon Sunday, Acacia Park, 115 E. Platte Ave., free; ppglcc.org or 471-4429.

PRIDEFEST

GT 7/17/11

GENNA ORD, THE GAZETTE

Sixteen-year-old Mallory Kaminski, right, looks back at her sister Lexi, 13, as they dance Saturday along to the "Electric Slide" during PrideFest in Acacia Park. About 150 vendors were at the event. This year marks the 21st year for the festival.

A COMMUNITY WHERE GAYS FEEL ACCEPTED

People say politics in city haven't detracted from welcoming attitude

BY ANGIE JACKSON
angie.jackson@gazette.com

Maddie Peltier-Meade, her partner Karen and their five children were used to being targets before they moved to Monument.

In Ohio, anti-gay activists stuck a knife in their door. In Minnesota, residents flocked their yard with picket signs to protest Peltier-Meade's wedding. Now settled in the Pikes Peak region, she and her family feel accepted and safe.

That's even after Mayor Steve Bach this month refused to sign a proclamation supporting PrideFest, and the Colorado Springs City Council this week rejected a resolution condemning a recent alleged homophobic attack at a fast-food restaurant.

"I love it here because we come from a very intensely anti-gay community.

SEE PRIDEFEST • PAGE 5

ONLINE > In depth

- To see more pictures of PrideFest, go to gazette.com.
- Find out what readers are saying about the story at gazette.com.

EST: Woman says area place to raise her kids

Alyssa Bila, left, and Dominique Rough laugh as they play a game Saturday during PrideFest in Acacia Park.

GENNA ORD, THE GAZETTE

& Horse Rescue, said community members stepped up when he was the victim of a hate crime outside a local club in 2009. He suffered a traumatic brain injury and had a tooth knocked out, but the support eased some of the pain of his long recovery.

"I felt like everybody reached out to me and expressed their concern. We have a very good gay community here," said Ramirez, a Fort Carson soldier. This month, the Pentagon announced it would abide by an appellate court order and stop discharging openly gay troops.

Lisa Cush and her three children attended the event in support of the community.

"The reason for the festival is important to us," Cush said as her children, ages 1, 3 and 6, slurped down slushies in the shade. "It's important to us to be supportive of our friends and neighbors and let them know we care."

Cush said PrideFest is a family-friendly event and her kids loved playing in the bounce house, fishing for ducks and meeting dogs from National Mill Dog Rescue.

"It's very family-oriented. I think that's important because we're all families here," she said.

ONLINE

Pride Is Ageless

AARP has created a new online home for the older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The page links to news stories on such hot topics as same-sex marriage, gay adoption and the repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, as well as articles on personal finance, travel and other issues of interest. In addition, the site clarifies AARP's positions and advocacy efforts in the LGBT arena. ■ Check out the page at aarp.org/pride.

"GT" 7/14/11

OUR VIEW

MAYOR SHOULD SET A DEFINITIVE TONE

No place for intolerance in a 'strong city'

We are a city that has struggled with questions about its identity for some time. Are we a military town? Are we a tourist's dream destination? Can we preserve our trails and open space lifestyle and still grow? How can we become a business-friendly, sophisticated, cultural mecca? These questions have yet to be answered.

One thing that we should all be able to agree on is that we don't want to be a city that accepts hatred, bigotry or senseless violence.

Since a July 3 attack that has been characterized as an anti-gay hate crime, local gay and lesbian advocates have asked for a proclamation denouncing the incident from the city's leaders. The answer has been no.

The Gazette's editorial board thinks this is a mistake.

Mayor Steve Bach has the opportunity to do what he said he wanted to do during his campaign. He can try to make Colorado Springs a better city. He can set a definitive tone for his administration.

He can make it crystal clear that ours is an inclusive community that will not tolerate despicable crimes against any group or individual.

Colorado Springs is not the hate capital that many would have you believe it is. There are no segregated neighborhoods, as in some cities. The city has a rich Hispanic heritage. The Gil Foundation, one of the nation's strongest funders and organizers of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights work, is headquartered here.

Throughout recent history our city has not had the level of hate crimes that Boulder or Denver has experienced. Numbers from the Colorado Springs police indicate that the city's confirmed number of hate crimes in 2010 was 15, with 4 of those being against gays. As we have reported before, Boulder a city with one fourth the population of the Springs, has had nine hate-related crimes in the last two years.

But the perception of the Springs as a white, anti-gay, nondiverse place still persists and it hurts us.

Mayor Bach *has* denounced the attack and discrimination and violence in general, but a formal, stronger response would carry much more weight. The response should firmly emphasize that the only way our city will be a success is if all people feel safe here. Crimes of violence against any group cannot be tolerated if we are to succeed and the mayor needs to assure the community they will not be tolerated.

We must come together as a community if we are to attract new businesses, retain our youth and change the misguided perceptions about our city. One of the reasons many voters wanted a 'strong mayor' was for leadership. We cannot be a 'strong city' without it.

So Mr. Mayor, set the ball in motion, a leader leads. — **Pula Davis, for the Gazette editorial board. Friend Pula on Facebook.**

GT 7/15/11

GAY MARRIAGE COULD BE ON COLORADO BALLOTS

State board reviewing language next week

The Associated Press

DENVER • A constitutional amendment to repeal Colorado's gay marriage ban and replace it with language saying marriage is allowed regardless of sex could be headed to the 2012 ballot.

A state title board will review language next week to clear the proposal for ballots. If approved, supporters would have to collect about 86,000 signatures to put the question to voters.

The proposal would reverse a 2006 amendment that said only a union of one man and one woman would be a valid marriage. That language would be replaced with a sentence saying, "Marriage will have the same requirements and effects regardless of whether the parties are the same or different sex."

The sponsors are 19-year-old college students who say they were inspired by the recent vote in New York state to allow same-sex marriage there.

"I feel like it's time to start fighting for it here," said Mark Olmstead of Aurora. Olmstead said he does not have any immediate plans to marry but wants the right to if he chooses.

However, not all gay-rights supporters think the ballot proposal is a good idea. Brad Clark, the executive director of One Colorado, said the group won't pursue petitioning the measure onto ballots. An earlier attempt the remove the constitution's gay marriage ban failed to get enough signatures in 2010.

A proposal to allow civil unions passed the Democratic state Senate earlier this year but failed in the Republican House. Clark said his group is focused on improving chances for civil unions in the Legislature, not seeking a ballot measure.

The sponsor of the unsuccessful civil unions bill, Democratic Sen. Pat Steadman of Denver, said the timing may be bad for a gay-marriage question.

"I don't know that next year is really the right time to go after this issue in the Colorado Constitution. It's an important election cycle and I think a lot of resources are going to be directed elsewhere," he said.

Talking about the young sponsors, Steadman said, "I think they speak for a lot of people who think what's in our constitution today is discriminatory and anachronistic, but I don't think there's going to be a real outpouring of resources to try to get this on the ballot next year."

A gay-marriage opponent predicted Thursday that voters would reject the change.

"We have every confidence that the people of Colorado would affirm that vote again if an attempt to repeal marriage comes to the ballot," said Carrie Gordon Earll of Focus on the Family.

The sponsors of the proposal aren't giving up. Emily Rhodes, a 19-year-old student at Metropolitan State College of Denver, said she doesn't understand why some gay-marriage supporters say the time isn't right.

"I'm really confident we can pull this off," Rhodes said. "I feel like, as time goes by, people are becoming more open to the idea of gay marriage."

PRIDEFEST 2011

NUTS & BOLTS

2 days this year

Saturday and Sunday July 16 & 17, 10am- 6pm

SATURDAY & SUNDAY Food court, *Miller Lite Beer Garden* and *The Script Liquor Lounge* are open both days 10AM to 6PM

SATURDAY Family Fun Day All Day in Acacia Park

SUNDAY Parade at Noon begins at East Cache La Poudre and runs South on North Tejon Street to Platte Ave.

SUNDAY Two Stages of Entertainment Headliner – Arch Hooks 3 – 6pm

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS
We Create Community

SCOTT HENTE
PRESIDENT

July 6, 2011

Colorado Springs Pride Center
2011 PrideFest Committee
2508 E. Bijou St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Dear PrideFest Attendees

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of you to beautiful Colorado Springs for the weekend of July 16 and 17, 2011. PrideFest honors our diversity and inclusiveness and we thank you for your willingness to commemorate the Pikes Peak region with your event. As this is your 21st anniversary celebration, it truly shows that you are "coming of age" in our community. Please take pride in all that you have contributed to our understanding and dialogue and for your willingness to show the Nation that we are a welcoming City.

PrideFest is a celebration of individual and collective pride by members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community. GLBT residents of Colorado Springs have made and continue to make significant contributions in the arts, business, and non-profit communities and to the quality of life in our City, doing their jobs with distinction and professionalism - and for that we thank you.

PrideFest has, for the past 21 years, served as a celebration of diversity in our City. It is an example of the Constitutional precept of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which are inalienable rights given by our Creator, and represents that all people should be allowed to live their lives with dignity and respect.

It is our understanding that your theme this year is "Springs Graffiti". We wish you all of the best as you revive and relive the Fabulous 50's! You, your families, and your friends have our best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable celebration. Have a great time!

Sincerely,

Scott Hente
President, Colorado Springs City Council

Jan Martin
President Pro Tem, Colorado Springs City Council

CITY HALL

RALLY FOR A RESOLUTION

BY MARIA ST. LOUIS-SANCHEZ
maria.sanchez@gazette.com

ONLINE > In depth
Watch video with this story at gazette.com

Leaders of the gay and lesbian community, local Democrats and clergy gathered Tuesday on the steps of City Hall to urge the Colorado Springs City Council and Mayor Steve Bach to sign a resolution condemning an attack that's been characterized as a hate crime.

About 40 people attended the rally, many of whom also spoke afterward at the City Council meeting at which they blasted Bach for declining just days before the attack to issue a proclamation endorsing an upcoming gay pride event.

"We're gathered here today be-

SEE RESOLUTION • PAGE 2

RESOLUTION: 1 was passed 8 years ago, councilor says

FROM PAGE 1

cause of the situation that spurred us to remember that we have not eased the hate that has been fostered in this town since Amendment 2," said Carolyn Catley, El Paso County Democratic Party secretary. "It is not one incident that brings us here, it is an incident that has been tolerated for over a decade. It is an incident that has been tolerated by members of our council and our mayor who will not speak out and denounce hate crimes against our citizens."

Amendment 2, passed by Colorado voters in 1992, banned laws protecting gays from discrimination. Colorado was labeled the "hate state" by opponents who challenged it in court. It was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996.

The attack happened early July 3 at a north Colorado Springs fast-food restaurant. One victim said that he and two other male dancers who perform at a local gay club and several of their friends were assaulted by a group of five males and two females who called them "faggots." No arrests have been made.

> "This is not Mayberry. It's a grown-up city and it's time we started acting like one."
> NANCY-JO MORRIS – transgender woman

Colorado Police Sgt. Steve Noblitt said last week that the attack appeared to be a hate crime, based on what the victims told officers. However, during Tuesday's council meeting, Police Chief Richard Myers said it was too early in the investigation to determine if it was a hate crime.

Nancy-Jo Morris, a transgender woman, said she attended the rally and council meeting to give a voice to the victims who were too scared to come forward.

"This is the 21st century and there is no reason for an area like Colorado Springs to be acting like the pre-segregation South," Morris said. "This is not Mayberry. It's a grown-up city and it's time we started acting like one."

Bach on Tuesday defended his decision not to sign the PrideFest proclamation, arguing that it did not signify that he was intolerant.

"I made my position clear during my campaign, so it wasn't any surprise. I was still elected," Bach said during the council meeting. "I hope you will find in my actions what you don't see in my persona. I love everyone in this community."

He said before the meeting that he would not sign a resolution condemning the attack, which he has already done in statements issued by city spokespeople.

Council members also rejected the need for a resolution condemning the attack, with Councilwoman Lisa Czelatdko lashing out at the claim that Colorado Springs has a reputation for being intolerant.

"I resent the representation that Colorado Springs is a city of ignorance and intolerance and small-mindedness," Czelatdko said.

Speaking about the City Council, she said, "I'm sorry but you are not looking at a group of homophobic, small-minded individuals."

City Council President Scott Hente said that eight years ago, the council had passed a resolution promoting goodwill in the city and condemning racism and discrimination. The resolution is posted at the base of the steps inside City Hall.

"I think we've already done what you've asked us to do," he said.

Contact the writer at 636-0274.

LETTERS

Even more reprehensible

Silence is deadly. The silence from the city and county leadership regarding the hate crime against two gay soldiers recently is deafening. Not speaking up against it sends the message loud and clear to our openly-gay service members that they are not welcome here. It sends the message that violence against them will be tolerated by our leaders. It sends the message to the world that we have not changed since Amendment 2, and we are indeed still the hateful city we were labeled back then.

I am disappointed and disgusted. Not signing a proclamation for PrideFest is one thing. Not denouncing a crime perpetrated against soldiers who were targeted because they were gay is irresponsible. All crimes are unfortunate, but a hate crime as defined by Colorado law, is reprehensible. And to not send a message to our soldiers and service members that they are welcome here and will be protected by the law here, is even more reprehensible. They fought for our freedom, but are not equal in the eyes of our city leaders. Shame on our council, commissioners, and especially the mayor, for not stepping into their leadership roles. We have high regard for the military in Colorado Springs. We should have the same regard for the Lesbian and gay service members.

By remaining silent, we continue to enforce the perception of Colorado Springs as a city of hate. Good luck getting companies to bring jobs here. You blew it again.

Carolyn Cathey
Colorado Springs

Promote equality, diversity

I was so upset after reading the article "No PrideFest declaration by council" that I had to write in. I am currently taking notes of council members to ensure I will not re-elect them. Councilwoman Angela Dougan is on top of that list. Angela apparently has never attended any other downtown event where there are beer gardens and tattoo places being represented. That is not all that is available at PrideFest. Thank you councilwoman, for showing us just how close-minded you really are.

I am proud my husband and I teach our son what equality and diversity is. I make a point to take him to various events to show him what diversity and equality is: Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo, PrideFest, even Sunday on the Town (when we had it), just to name a few. Ultimately as Christians it is not our place to cast judgments. Maybe our city council and mayor need to not issue a "declaration" for any event. Let's save time and money. Now if only these elected officials would show us they promote equality and diversity instead of just hollow words to get votes.

Lucretia Witt
Colorado Springs

OPINION

BARRY NOREEN
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House bill is good start in taking on bullying

Bullying is not OK.

On Friday, Gov. John Hickenlooper signed HB1254, which requires all public schools to adopt anti-bullying policies. The legislation had pretty broad support but showed up on the radar of some Christian groups because it specifically includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students for protection.

We all know teenagers can be nasty, and that mere passage of a law will not bring an automatic halt to bullying in schools. The civil rights act passed in 1964 did not end racism in America.

But there is a point in movements — and there has been an anti-bullying movement — when it's important that a society, through its government, makes an official declaration about right and wrong. That's why HB1254 is important.

"You have to name something in order to work on fixing it," said Shawna Rae Kemppainen, executive director of Inside Out Youth Services of Colorado Springs, one of a large coalition of groups that lobbied for the bill.

Other groups included the Colorado Association of School Boards, the Colorado Association of School Executives, the Colorado Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

Kids are bullied for lots of reasons, but there's no doubt that being ostracized or put down because of one's sexual orientation is one of the most common factors.

In a statement released last week, Kemppainen cited research that says for each youngster bullied because of sexual orientation, there are four straight kids bullied merely because someone perceives them to be a member of some sexual identity minority group.

"Fewer than half of school principals say that gender identity is a part of their anti-bullying policy," Kemppainen said.

Bill sponsor State Sen. Pat Steadman, D-Denver, said the legislation "sends a clear message that bullying is no longer an adolescent rite of passage but a serious problem that

PILOT APOLOGIZES FOR GAY COMMENTS

Southwest releases an apology email this week

The Associated Press

DALLAS • The Southwest Airlines pilot who insulted gays and older workers in an open-mike rant has apologized.

The 12-year veteran of the Dallas-based airline, James Taylor of Argyle, Texas, was caught on an open cockpit mike using slurs and profanity to complain that attendants were mostly gay or too old or too heavy for him to date. The comments went out over an air-traffic control frequency.

Taylor said in an email that Southwest distributed this week to employees that the comments were "truly insensitive of me and I would like all of you to know that from now on, I will show nothing but the utmost respect during my interactions with all employees."

The Southwest flight attendants' union said it dropped plans to file a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission after Taylor apologized. But union president Thom McDaniel also said the incident wasn't isolated and shouldn't be swept under the rug.

"We hope we never have to deal with this type of incident again," McDaniel said.

Southwest, which hasn't formally identified the pilot but confirmed that the email was legitimate, said the pilot was suspended and ordered to go through diversity training.

Southwest spokeswoman Linda Rutherford said the pilot was punished in April and she wasn't aware of the airline considering any additional reprimand.

Taylor previously apologized to air-traffic controllers and to Southwest employees in Houston — he had singled out flight attendants there for particular derision, calling them ugly except for "maybe a handful of cute chicks" — but had not apologized more broadly until the email this week.

GT 6/30/11

OUR VIEW

VISUALIZE A PARTY CALLED HETEROFEST

Would the mayor be wise to endorse it?

Visualize men and women holding hands in a march down Tejon Street. The men are dressed in suits; the women in long skirts with doilies on their heads. They are marching toward Acacia Park for HeteroFest, a celebration of Christians devoted to traditional, heterosexual relationships. Signs condemn birth control and abortion and advocate large families. Vender booths promote home-schooling literature, churches and other religious organizations. Speakers talk about the benefits of married heterosexual couples. Some find the event nauseating.

Now imagine Mayor Steve Bach signs a proclamation giving the city's endorsement to this party. It would be the city government's imprimatur on a lifestyle choice that some value and others do not. It isn't the city's business to bless certain types of families, sexual orientations, or philosophies and ideologies that do not relate directly to the workings of city bureaucracy, which is supposed to provide and manage parks, roads, public safety and infrastructure.

If our mayor is to endorse events that promote causes, he will inevitably entangled the city in all sorts of needless controversy. He will find himself, for the sake of fairness, giving proclamations to the major Catholic men's conference that is hosted by the Diocese of Colorado Springs. He will find himself endorsing various public events hosted by Focus on the Family. He may find himself endorsing politically charged Muslim events, scandalizing some Christians and Jews. He may find himself endorsing gun shows, thus alienating those who don't like guns.

So, for good reason, Mayor Bach does not sign proclamations for private-sector parties, parades and events. It is not his place.

Yet the lack of a proclamation has somehow become a form of discrimination to one organization that wants one.

"He has already set the precedent that he's excluding a large portion of the community," said Charles Irwin, executive director of the Colorado Springs Pride Center.

Irwin wants Mayor Bach to sign a proclamation for PrideFest, the annual celebration for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. On June 23, Bach rejected the request, as promised during his campaign.

The Gazette supports PrideFest and this column would soundly condemn any effort by city officials to interfere with this festival. We want city officials to facilitate the event in every reasonable manner, providing security, blocking streets and issuing permits in a timely fashion. We want the community to treat this event with the respect that is due any peaceable assembly.

But the event doesn't need city government's sanction any more than the hundreds of other events in Colorado Springs that take place each year without a proclamation. Who cares whether city politicians think a festival is wonderful or not? The event, and the cause it advocates, speaks for itself. The freedom to stage the event is what matters, not the willingness of a city politician to sound off about how much he appreciates it.

Bach is correct to avoid an endorsement of PrideFest. We urge him to deny requests for proclamations honoring any and all private events that are not directly related to inner workings of city government — even big televised golf tournaments.

Constantly seeking a proclamation from the mayor, for an event the city does not sponsor, is just asking for a fight. It creates needless conflict and division, not the kind of cohesion that our community needs. — **Wayne Laugesen, editorial page editor, for the editorial board. Friend Wayne on Facebook.**

GT 7/5/11

COLORADO SPRINGS

NO PRIDEFEST DECLARATION BY COUNCIL, EITHER

BY DANIEL J. CHACÓN
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A proposed City Council proclamation in support of PrideFest is kaput.

Council President Scott Hente and President Pro Tem Jan Martin polled their colleagues and found they didn't have enough votes to pass a proclamation in support of the annual celebration for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

"I certainly wish it would have gone a different way," Charles Irwin, executive director of the Colorado Springs Pride Center, said Thursday.

"Hate is a learned trait, just like equality. You have to teach your children that people are equal. Hate is the same thing, and I think by city officials or leaders in the community, whomever they may be, not making the statement that equality is what we want, sends a message," he said.

Hente and Martin, who supported issuing a council proclamation, wrote a letter of support instead.

"PrideFest honors our diversity and inclusiveness and we thank you for your willingness to commemorate the Pikes Peak region with your event," Hente and Martin wrote jointly in a letter addressed to PrideFest attendees.

In an interview, Martin said colleagues that she talked to about issuing a PrideFest proclamation weren't sure whether the council should issue proclamations.

"The question actually seems to be bigger than the PrideFest for this council. The question is: Does this council even want to do proclamations?" she said.

Event organizers asked Mayor Steve Bach

SEE PRIDEFEST • PAGE 4

PRIDEFEST:

Dougan says the event isn't family-oriented

FROM PAGE 3

to issue a proclamation even though Bach had said he wouldn't on the campaign trail. When Bach rejected the request, organizers turned to Hente and Martin.

Councilwoman Angela Dougan said she didn't think the proclamation would have been appropriate. She said the event, which draws thousands of people, including children, isn't family-oriented.

"Last year, I purposely looked at their book and thought, 'I want to look. I want to see. I want to be open-minded.' I went through it and it was beer gardens, tattoo places. I just thought, 'This isn't something I'd feel comfortable bringing my teenage daughters to.'"

Dougan also said not everyone in the community would feel comfortable attending the event, which is July 16-17.

"I even have friends who are gay, and they're like, 'We hate the PrideFest. We wish it would go away. That is the worst of us,'" Dougan said.

RESOLUTION: Advocate says Bach should take stand for equality

FROM PAGE 1

tolerance of any type," the mayor's statement said. He added that his new "Spirit of the Springs" initiative will work to help unify people in the community.

City spokeswoman Mary Scott said the initiative is meant to help bring all people in the community together to help build a common vision and support the city.

Scott said last week that Bach's policy is to not sign proclamations in support of private events that are political in nature.

Le Lait said she had been told about the mayor's statement to The Gazette, but said it didn't go far enough.

"I don't think it (the statement) even really acknowledges it," she said. "I think he is missing an opportunity to take a stand against hate crimes and say that is not who we are."

She said a resolution endorsed by the mayor and council could help point the city in the right direction.

"It's important that we as a city are very clear about where we stand about this crime and about welcoming openly gay members of our community," she said.

The resolution must be approved by the mayor and City Council President Scott Hente before it is considered by the full council.

The reported attack happened July 3 about 3 a.m. at a fast-food restaurant in northeast Colorado Springs. No arrests have been made, and police have said the only description they have of the attackers is that they were five black males and two black females.

Three male dancers who perform at a gay nightclub and two female security guards went to the restaurant after the club closed.

"We were still in our go-go outfits," said Matthew, who spoke on the condition that his last name not be used. "These guys come in after us. They start talking crap basically. We were just standing in line getting food.

"We were trying to ignore them as much as we could. But this guy pushes (the female security guard) and then swings on her. We're like, 'This guy is going to hit a woman.' It was basically an all-out brawl after that."

Matthew, whose jaw was broken in two places, said he was hit with brass knuckles. Another of the men with him also had facial fractures from the fight.

"While they were beating us up, they were saying 'faggot,'" he said. "That's all I heard."

Matthew said he hoped Bach would reconsider issuing a proclamation for PrideFest. Not because of the attack, he said, but because it's the right thing to do.

"It's basically equal rights, and I think everyone should get treated the same way," he said.

Charles Irwin, director of the Colorado Springs Pride Center, an advocate for the local gay and lesbian community, dismissed any link between Bach's decision on the PrideFest proclamation and the assault, but added the mayor should take a stand for equality.

"I don't think the attack has anything to do with the mayor not supporting the proclamation," Irwin said. "But in the broader sense, when we have a high-ranking leader saying 'we support equality in our community,' it makes people think twice."

HATE CRIMES IN COLORADO SPRINGS

Each year, Colorado Springs police record several instances of crimes against people because of their age, ethnicity, race, gender or sexuality. Police statistics include bias-based crimes against all people and not just those who are considered a protected class under Colorado hate crime legislation.

NUMBER OF BIAS-BASED CRIMES IN COLORADO SPRINGS *

	Against all groups	Against gays
2006	20	1
2007	9	3
2008	19	2
2009	23	4
2010	15	4

Source: Colorado Springs police

* Numbers are based on confirmed cases of biased-based crimes in the city. There may be more cases that police haven't been able to confirm.

HATE CRIME

DEMS WANT BACH TO CONDEMN ATTACK

Mayor will be asked to back anti-bias resolution

BY MARIA ST. LOUIS-SANCHEZ AND DANIEL CHACÓN
maria.sanchez@gazette.com

The El Paso County Democratic Party is calling on Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach to publicly condemn an attack that police have characterized as an anti-gay hate crime.

Local Democratic Party officials said community members will join them at noon today in front of City Hall, 107 N. Nevada Ave., for a news conference at which they'll ask the mayor and City Council to back a resolution stating that violence and intimidation against people because of their race, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation won't be tolerated.

ONLINE > In depth

The city has more buses than allowed. "City Desk" blog at **gazette.com**

Just days before the attack, Bach declined to issue a proclamation endorsing PrideFest, an annual gay pride celebration.

"We think it's important for our mayor to stand up and say to the world, 'No, this is not our city,'" said Christy Le Lait, executive director of the local Democratic Party. "We want our city officials to say Colorado Springs is not a place where hate crimes are acceptable."

In a statement released last week, Bach denounced the attack, saying his decision not to issue a PrideFest proclamation was not an endorsement of discrimination.

"There is no place in our city for discrimination or in-

SEE RESOLUTION • PAGE 7

IntelligenceReport® Parade.com/intel

WORLD

Developed World Leads on Gay Rights

Last month, the District of Columbia joined Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire in legalizing gay marriage. Though it's hard to generalize, there is "definitely a movement" toward expanded rights for gays in much of the world, says Scott Long of Human Rights Watch.

Albania recently passed a law to protect gays against bias. A court in New Delhi, India, overturned that city's ban on consensual gay sex, and Nepal is expected to legalize same-sex marriage this year in hopes of attracting gay tourists. China opened its first state-sponsored gay bar in December, following a dramatic rise in the spread of HIV/AIDS among gay men. "If people are afraid to 'out' themselves, they're forced into a conspiracy of silence that prevents them from receiving information that can save their lives," explains Jessica Stern of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. In fact, rates of new HIV infections are higher in countries with repressive laws against homosexuality, according to research from the United Nations agency on HIV/AIDS.

Yet gay sex is still illegal in 80 countries. At least seven impose the death penalty for homosexual acts—usually under Islamic law. Gays "are often used as political proxies for other agendas—the West, anything modern or nontraditional," Stern explains.

SAME-SEX RIGHTS AROUND THE GLOBE

Same-sex marriage is legal: **Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, and others.**

Homosexual acts are punishable by death: **Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Mauritania; parts of Nigeria and Sudan.**

Sanctions against homosexuals seem to be easing: **China, Singapore, Cuba, Nepal.**

Sanctions seem to be tightening: **Burundi, Nigeria, Russia, Uganda.**

Sources: Human Rights Watch; International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

"Positive" Monday 6/27/11

THIS YEAR'S GAY PRIDE PARADE IN NEW YORK WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL

The Associated Press

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paola Perez, left, and her partner, Linda Collazo, march in the annual Gay Pride parade Sunday in Greenwich Village.

NEW YORK • One of the world's oldest and largest gay pride parades turned into a carnival-like celebration of same-sex marriage Sunday as hundreds of thousands of revelers rejoiced at New York's new law giving gay couples the same marital rights as everyone else.

This year, the revelry went beyond floats and dancing. It included wedding plans.

"We've been waiting to get married in Central Park for years, and now we got here just in time for history to be made," said Bryce Croft of Kettering, Ohio, who attended the parade with her partner, Stephanie Croft.

The two women are not yet legally married although they share the same name, and they are planning to move to New York and get married. They were in a restaurant when they learned that the same-sex marriage bill had passed.

"We cried over dinner, right into the mozzarella sticks," Stephanie Croft said.

Throngs of cheering supporters greeted Gov. Andrew Cuomo as he led off the parade two days after signing the historic bill that made New York the sixth state to extend full marriage rights to gay couples.

"New York has sent a message to the nation," Cuomo said before the march down Fifth Avenue. "It is time for marriage equality."

Obama's obvious semantic con job on same-sex marriage

"Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will."
— Martin Luther King

Or, we could quote Hamlet's soliloquy: "To be or not to be."

The latter seems an accurate depiction of President Obama's agonizing — his views are "evolving," he says — on whether to support marriage equality for gay men and lesbians. The former describes the way his hesitation is likely regarded by them and their allies.

Last week, the day before the New York legislature took the historic step of legalizing same sex marriage in that state, the president, speaking at a gay and lesbian fundraiser, asked for patience on the same issue. He offered platitudes about eventual equality, but could not bring himself to say the "M" word, allowing only that gay couples deserve the same rights as other couples. Otherwise, he held fast to the position he espoused during the 2008 campaign: support for civil unions — not same sex marriage.

OPINION

LEONARD PITTS

COLUMNIST

Which is a semantic con job that allows him to pretend he doesn't know marriage is a civil union. As a legal matter, after all, marriage is not defined by love and commitment, but by the same factors that define a so-called civil union: tax advantages, inheritability, and other, similar benefits.

It is as a cultural matter that love and commitment enter the definition, and those are things over which a president has no jurisdiction. So the argument is really about terminology. Obama draws a distinction without a difference because he apparently cannot bring himself to say the dangerous word: marriage.

And here, allow me a confession: I've been where Obama is. Back in 1996, I wrote in this space how I'd had no issue with gay adoption or military service, but gay marriage always stopped me. I struggled for months to justify it, to come up with a reason that satisfied my own conscience.

But logic always brought me back to the same conclusion: the distinction I sought to make was based less in reason than in fear, hidebound tradition, and an inability to accept that gays and lesbians bring the same depth of feeling to their relationships as their heterosexual counterparts. There is a dignity in telling those feelings to the judge, solemnizing them such that they are officially recognized by government and society. Gay men and lesbians are deserving of that dignity.

So one wishes Obama would think twice before counseling them to be patient. The historical parallels to Robert Kennedy offering the same counsel in the years when buses and churches were being firebombed are too acute.

Obama has been a good president where gay issues are concerned, has supported anti-hate crimes legislation and the repeal of "Don't ask, don't tell." But marriage equality is the Rubicon he has not yet brought himself to cross. He should start crossing.

Not that doing the right thing should be a matter of public opinion, but support for marriage equality is climbing toward the majority. Voices of fear are being shouted down, winds of change are blowing and we approach a crossroads of possibility where the need for leadership is critical.

Two words of advice, then, for President Obama: Evolve faster.

Email Leonard Pitts Jr. at lpitts@miamiherald.com

NUMBER OF SAME-SEX COUPLES IN STATE GREW

The Associated Press

DENVER • The number of same-sex households in Colorado jumped by about 60 percent in the past decade, and more than one in five gay couples in the state are raising children, according to U.S. Census Bureau data released Thursday. The data puts Colorado in line with other states showing more same-sex households. In addition, Colorado followed national trends showing more households involving unmarried couples and declining home ownership rates for Latinos.

The 2010 census was the first to ask same-sex households about children.

"I think that this information being out will help people understand that gay and lesbian couples are in all parts of the community," said Robin Kniech, a recently elected member of the Denver City Council who is raising a 2-year-old boy with her gay partner.

Colorado's figures show the number of households that reported being led by a same-sex couple rose from 10,045 in 2000 to 16,114 in 2010, an increase of 60.4 percent. Before 2000, the Census Bureau didn't count same-sex households.

Same-sex households with children numbered 3,690 in 2010, or about 23 percent of all gay households.

The growth of reported same-sex households could mean political change. Colorado voters banned gay marriage in the state constitution in 2006, but a civil measure before lawmakers this year cleared the Democratic Senate but narrowly failed in a Republican House committee.

Louis Trujillo, left, and Jesse Ulibarri, walk in City Center Park with their 12-year-old son Israel in Denver. The number of same-sex households in Colorado jumped by about 60 percent last decade, and more than one in five gay couples in the state are raising children, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

"GT" 6/30/11

EL PASO COUNTY

MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE

Colorado Springs couple Erin Madigan, left, and Amy Ramos with children, clockwise from top left, Cole Ramos, Nick Weaver, Reiane Burton, Slade Ramos and Adam Ramos.

CENSUS SHOWS JUMP IN GAY HOUSEHOLDS

Increase might indicate increased openness in GLBT community

BY MARIA ST. LOUIS-SANCHEZ
maria.sanchez@gazette.com

The number of same-sex couples in El Paso County surged by 80 percent from 2000 to 2010 — a growth rate about four times higher than the county's total population rate, according to data released today by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The data on same-sex households are part of a large census release of Colorado data that also includes details on the race, ethnicity, household structure and age of residents.

According to the census, 1,550 households — or about 6.6 per 1,000 — in El Paso County report to be headed by same-sex partners. About 28 percent of those households have kids. In 2000, 860 households were

SEE CENSUS • PAGE 2

ANSWER IS STILL NO
The mayor has refused to issue a proclamation for PrideFest. Page 3

ONLINE > Interactive map
See the growth of gay households around the state at gazette.com

STATE CENSUS FACTS
Latest data reveal who's getting married and who owns homes in Colorado. Page 2

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is becoming more aware of what is oppressing them," said Charles Irwin, executive director of the Colorado Springs Pride Center. "You are probably seeing more people saying, 'Yes this is a GLBT household.'"

Penny Green, an assistant professor of sociology at Colorado State University at Pueblo, agrees.

"I think those people have been here all along," she said. "I can't imagine that all of a sudden we have a huge increase in gays and lesbians. I have a feeling that people feel that they can be and they want to be more open."

She said members of gay households are becoming less scared to reveal themselves as they feel more accepted in the community. She said this happens as more heterosexuals get to know their gay neighbors and family members.

"All of these myths they have are disproven and they find out how ordinary and safe they are," she said. "After a while it matters less and less what their sexual orientation is."

In 2010, a Gallup poll found for the first time that a majority of Americans found gay and lesbian relations morally acceptable. In that same survey in 2011, 56 percent of Americans found them morally acceptable while 39 percent found them morally unacceptable.

– or almost one in four – are raising children younger than 18.

• Same-sex couples now make up eight of every 1,000 households in Colorado, up from six a decade ago.

• The number of unmarried male and female couples jumped 37 percent to 111,339 – a growth rate about twice the state average. One in three is raising children.

• Homeownership among black households fell almost 4 percentage points to 40.9 percent, while Latino homeownership fell about 2½ percentage points to 48.3 percent.

• Latino and Asian residents had the highest percentage of traditional married-couple families with children – both exceeding 30 percent of all households. Black and white residents had the lowest percentages – about 17 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Blacks still had the highest percentage of households – 13.3 percent – headed by single women with children, but that was down significantly from 15.3 percent in 2000.

BURT HUBBARD, I-NEWS NETWORK

BY THE NUMBERS

34.1	5.4 PERCENT	3.28 PERCENT	7.2 PERCENT
Median age in El Paso County	Households in El Paso County headed by unmarried partners	Households with three generations living together	Households that are headed by single moms

Amy Ramos said she and her partner, Erin Madigan, made a concerted effort to be counted as a same-sex household when the census form came to their house.

"We made sure we did everything we could on the form that would point to us being a gay family," she said.

Ramos and Madigan have been partners for about five years and together raise the four children that Ramos had from a former marriage. During summers, a 12-year-old family friend also joins them. The couple work full-time jobs, shuttling their kids to sporting events and managing their sons' wresting club.

"We're just a typical family," she said. "We have four kids, they are in three different sports, and we're very involved in everything."

Ramos, originally from Colorado Springs, moved to Texas and Mississippi when she was younger and came back to be closer to her family. Even though she grew up here, she was worried about how she would be perceived in a city that has a reputation for being hostile to gays and lesbians.

"It worried me for my kids' sake," she said. "I didn't want them to be treated any differently."

She said they've felt comfortable since they moved within the boundaries of Colorado Springs School District 11.

"The teachers and parents we've come across in the kids' schools have been amazing, they don't discriminate," she said.

Politically, the city is conservative on the issue of same-sex relationships. In the recent nonpartisan Colorado Springs mayoral election, a question on a Focus on the Family survey asked candidates whether they would issue a proclamation endorsing the annual gay-pride parade. Seven of the nine candidates — including Mayor Steve Bach — said they opposed issuing such proclamation. Bach kept to his word and did not sign a proclamation endorsing the 2011 PrideFest.

Even so, Madigan said she doesn't feel discriminated against in the Springs.

"I know when it comes to the mayor and stuff, yeah, the city seems intolerant, but in the day-to-day stuff with other people, not at all."

The city's reputation probably does keep some families quiet about their sexuality, said Pride Center director Irwin. He said he suspects Colorado Springs has even more same-sex households than what was reported in the census numbers. Still, he said, he's glad that more people are being counted.

"Do I think everyone has come streaming out? No," Irwin said. "But I do see a movement where people are saying to themselves and their friends, 'It's time people realized that we do live here and we do everything that you do.'"

Contact the writer at 636-0274.

Only time will tell

7/4/11 GT

I found Wayne Laugesen's July 1 editorial ("Visualize a party called HeteroFest") interesting.

While making some good points, it ignores the fact that the dominate culture prevails every day of the week and can overwhelm our view of history. Lately, we have come to recognize this by acknowledging the importance and participation of minorities in our society. For example, we do this officially by calendaring such events as Black and Women's History months, or by holidays or events such as Martin Luther King Day, St. Patrick's Day, Columbus Day, or Cinco de Mayo.

I do hope that since our new mayor is unwilling to officially recognize or welcome the many GLBT citizens in Colorado Springs and out of town visitors, he will also decline to recognize or endorse other groups/events in a show of impartiality. Time will tell.

Finally, as I stated in the beginning, one must remember that if one is heterosexual, every day is HeteroDay. There's really no need for a special day.

Bob Armintor
Colorado Springs

GAY MARRIAGE

"Augusta" 6/26/11

HOW NEW YORK PUSHED GAY MARRIAGE INTO LAW

Strong governor, big national spending made the difference

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY
The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. • How did New York lawmakers, long known for their decades of late budgets and partisan gridlock, manage to pull off a generational milestone like legalizing gay marriage?

ANALYSIS

Friday night's victory for gay marriage advocates was the product of changing public attitudes, and a political campaign that was more sophisticated, better funded, and armed with more tenacious muscle — in the person of Gov. Andrew Cuomo — than a similar push that failed just two years ago.

Advocates spent more than $1 million trying to persuade legislators, much of it in the past two months. They targeted their publicity campaign at a dozen vulnerable or fence-sitting senators. Most of the cash came from what one lobbyist called an "unlimited" source: wealthy contributors in Manhattan and nationwide.

The Human Rights Campaign, part of a coalition of gay, lesbian,

SEE GAY MARRIAGE • PAGE 2

"Augusta"

GAY MARRIAGE: Polls showed public support

FROM PAGE 1

bisexual and transgender groups, delivered more than 53,000 post cards and made more than 11,000 phone calls from constituents to their senators. Phone banks ran twice a week, one featuring former first daughter Chelsea Clinton. She was just one of a string of celebrities, from Lady Gaga to former New York Giants great Michael Strahan, who peppered the public with gay marriage messages.

Gay marriage advocates hired 30 full-time field organizers to press their case. Other critical hires were lobbying firms that specialized in Republican politics, a mix that opened doors in the Republican-controlled Senate.

The opponents of gay marriage weren't unarmed, just less so. For example, while groups opposed to gay marriage spent less than $100,000 on a TV ad buy in June, the gay marriage coalition spent more than $400,000, according to the Human Rights Campaign. A $1 million commitment from a national group opposed to gay marriage just didn't seem to register as loudly in Albany.

"Marriage equality prevailed in New York because of the governor's decisive leadership, the bipartisan support of New Yorkers, and an aggressive ground game, which ensured senators heard loud and clear, on a daily basis and in very personal ways, from constituents," said Kevin Nix of the Human Rights Campaign.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo reacts after same sex marriage was legalized after a vote Friday in the state Senate in Albany, N.Y.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cuomo resurrected the gay marriage push. It crashed in 2009 in what was then a Democrat-controlled Senate, taking the national momentum with it, and couldn't get off the ground a year later even after then-Gov. David Paterson defined gay marriage as a civil right.

Then Cuomo directed his skilled top aide, Steven Cohen, to bring the usually disparate groups together and plot the kind of strategy that won Cuomo the governor's office while rolling up political wins in his first months in office.

"He's a shrewd politician, and I have to say with a certain amount of envy and admiration," said New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan in the National Catholic Register this week. "But you talk about twisting arms, you talk about using every political trick in the book; he's doing it effectively."

A lack of resources is part of the lament of the Baptists, ultra-orthodox Jewish leaders, Christians and Catholics who led much of the opposition. They were unable to hire the lobbyists who are the fiber of Albany. They lacked the support of a statewide elected official willing to use his or her position as a bully pulpit. They seemed to have little but their voices carrying hymns through Senate hallways every day to counter one of the most powerful forces Albany has seen.

But it wasn't just a political fight. New Yorkers changed, and the money and politics followed. The June Quinnipiac University poll found 58 percent of New York voters supported the legalization of same-sex marriage. It's been a fast-growing position since 2004, when 66 percent of New Yorkers opposed gay marriage.

Supporters say the polling hints at the real forces at work: neighbor talking to neighbor, families embracing their gay children, and young people growing into middle age who always wondered what all the fuss was about.

And the votes for the bill Friday didn't come from Manhattan, but from far more conservative upstate.

"My parents taught us to be respectful, tolerant and accepting of others and to do the right thing," said Sen. Stephen Saland, 67, a Poughkeepsie Republican. "While I know that my vote will disappoint many, I also know that my vote is a vote of conscience ... I believe after much deliberation, I am doing the right thing in voting to support marriage equality."

N.Y. SAME-SEX WEDDING PLANS ARE IN FULL SWING

Churches say they're looking forward to ceremonies

The Associated Press

NEW YORK • As the news flashed around the globe that New York state had legalized gay marriage, New York fashion designer Malcolm Harris didn't waste any time. He dashed off a Twitter message to his boyfriend of nine years: "'Will you marry me?"

A city away, in Boston, Bernadette Smith decided to immediately relocate her business planning gay weddings to New York City.

In Brooklyn, pastors Ann Kansfield and Jennifer Aull received their first two requests to wed gay couples at their church in the borough's Greenpoint section. They scheduled one for Labor Day weekend.

Even as supporters of gay marriage celebrated victory in New York on Saturday, preparations were being made to make gay weddings a reality in the state.

Couples who had talked about going out-of-state to wed changed their plans. Reception venues got their first calls. Churches that accept gay unions said they were looking forward to hosting ceremonies.

After a lifetime of waiting, there was a sense of urgency.

The law signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo late Friday night doesn't take effect for 30 days, but Harris — who got a "yes" to his Twitter proposal — said he and fiancé K. Tyson Perez planned to get a marriage license right away, wed on paper, and then have a huge reception in six months.

"I can't wait to spend the rest of my life with him," Harris said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebecca Jones, of North Hampton, Mass., and Veronica Thoms, right, of Pelham, N.Y., celebrate the legalization of same-sex marriage in New York state.

"Gazette" 6/25/11

NEW YORK APPROVES SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

33-29 vote in state Senate passes bill

The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. • New York lawmakers voted to legalize same-sex marriage Friday, handing activists a breakthrough victory in the state where the gay rights movement was born.

New York will become the sixth state where gay couples can wed.

Though New York is a relative latecomer in allowing gay marriage, it is considered an important prize for advocates, given the state's size and New York City's international stature and its role as the birthplace of the gay rights movement.

The New York bill cleared the Republican-controlled state Senate on a 33-29 vote. The Democrat-led Assembly, which passed a different version last week, is expected to pass the new version with stronger religious exemptions and Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo, has promised to sign it. Same-sex couples can begin marrying 30 days after.

Sen. Stephen Saland voted against a similar bill in 2009, helping kill the measure and dealing a blow to the national gay rights movement.

"While I understand that my vote will disappoint many, I also know my vote is a vote of conscience," Saland said in a statement to The Associated Press before the vote. "I am doing the right thing in voting to support marriage equality."

Gay couples in gallery wept during Saland's speech.

New York, the nation's third most populous state, will join Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Washington, D.C., in allowing same-sex couples to wed.

R.I. grants civil unions for gays

PROVIDENCE, R.I. • The Rhode Island Senate on Wednesday approved a bill that would allow same-sex couples to enter into civil unions, a measure that Gov. Lincoln Chafee's office says he will sign.

The legislation, which already has passed the state House, allows gay couples to enter into civil unions that offer the same rights and benefits given to married couples under Rhode Island law.

Ahead of the vote, the independent governor called the legislation an "incremental step" toward allowing gay marriage, which he supports.

GAY PRIDE CELEBRATION

Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach kept his campaign promise to not back PrideFest.

MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE

NO SUPPORT FROM MAYOR, BUT MAYBE FROM COUNCIL

Members look into proclamation

BY DANIEL J. CHACÓN
daniel.chacon@gazette.com

The leaders of the City Council say they're willing to issue a proclamation in support of a gay pride celebration in Colorado Springs next month even if Mayor Steve Bach won't.

"I want to encourage diversity," council President Scott Hente said Wednesday. "I want to encourage a feeling of welcomeness for everybody within Colorado Springs."

Scott and President Pro Tem Jan Martin say they're reaching out to their colleagues to determine whether they support a proclamation for PrideFest, an annual celebration for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and its supporters.

"I have had a discussion with the City Attorney's Office to say, 'If we are going to issue a proclamation only from council, under our new form of government, what's the right way to do it?'" Hente said. "I just want to make sure we're doing it correctly."

Before he was elected, Bach made it clear he wouldn't issue such a procla-

SEE PRIDEFEST • PAGE 5

PRIDEFEST: Downtown event draws thousands each year

FROM PAGE 3

mation.

But the Colorado Springs Pride Center asked anyway.

On June 23, Bach rejected the request.

"My priorities are to transform our city government so that it works for everyone again and lead the charge to facilitate job creation for our citizens," the mayor wrote in a letter to Charles Irwin, the center's executive director.

"Therefore, I will not be signing proclamations such as you requested," he wrote.

Bach's decision drew sharp criticism.

"He says in quotes that you see all over the Internet, and I believe in his speech that day when he was inaugurated, he said, 'We're going to work together, and we're going to fix this city together,'" Irwin said.

"Together means, to me, everybody," Irwin said. "He has already set the precedent that he's excluding a large portion of the community."

Hente said he gives Bach credit for honoring his campaign commitment. But he doesn't agree with the mayor's stance not to issue the proclamation.

"I didn't agree with him when he said it during the campaign either," Hente said.

Martin said she respected the mayor's decision.

"I'm elected as an at-large City Council person, which means I represent the whole city," Martin said. "That includes all of the members of the community, and I don't distinguish between one and another."

As mayor, Bach represents the entire city, too, but Martin said she didn't want to criticize the mayor.

"During his campaign, he made it clear that he didn't intend to sign a proclamation," she said. "I think that's fine. My advice to him was, 'You either sign them all or you don't sign any.' The problem arises when you begin to pick and choose."

PrideFest, which is celebrating its 21st year, is July 16-17. The downtown event draws thousands of people annually.

Archbishop fears polygamy is next

GT 7/15/11

NEW YORK • New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan says he's worried that the next step in the marriage debate will be another redefinition to allow multiple partners and infidelity.

Writing on his blog Thursday, Dolan also lamented the anti-Catholic venom that surfaced in the gay marriage battle, saying he's worried that "believers will soon be harassed, threatened, and hauled into court" for their convictions.

New York became the sixth state to legalize gay marriage, on June 24.

"GT" 7/4/11

N.Y. GAYS ASK HOW NEW LAW MIGHT AFFECT TAX, BENEFITS

The Associated Press

NEW YORK • As same-sex marriage becomes legal in New York, companies and individuals are wrestling with the changing complexities of their financial realities.

For straight couples, the choice has generally been to marry or not to marry, period. But conflicting state and federal marriage laws and questions about corporate benefits policies make financial planning decisions much less cut-and-dried for many gay couples.

Jason Ganns, an accountant from Albany, figures getting married will save him $350 to $450 a year in state income taxes — after a devil of a time reconciling those forms with his federal return, on which he won't be considered married.

New York City resident Andrew Troup and his husband have kept their health insurance policies separate because of tax complications and are now weighing whether merging them will make sense after marriage.

And if some couples have been waffling on tying the knot, they'll have to decide whether now is the time to take the plunge if their employers restrict domestic partner benefits to the lawfully hitched.

NEWS: JUDGE RULES FEDERAL GAY-MARRIAGE BAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL
BY THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN THE COURTS, I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU "MARRIED"!
I WILL NOW "TIE THE KNOT"!
HEY! WHAT'S THIS?
TAXPAYERS ARE OFFICIALLY TIED INTO PROVIDING FEDERAL BENEFITS TO ALL MARRIED COUPLES!
BUT I THINK MARRIAGE SHOULD BE BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN!
TOUGH!
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